



## INVENTORY MANAGEMENT

In the photo above, a clerk at Tropicana Products, Inc., citrus fruit and juice producer of Bradenton, Florida, is recording receipt of materials in the company's new automated inventory management system. Known as MRO, for Maintenance, Repair and Operating supplies, the Tropicana system is an adaptation of the Shuttle Inventory Management System (SIMS) developed by NASA to assure an adequate supply of every item used in support of the Space Shuttle. The Tropicana version monitors inventory control, purchasing, receiving and departmental costing for eight major areas of the company's operation: the Industrial Glass, Plastics Manufacturing and Fort Pierce Citrus Manufacturing divisions, rail car repair, lift truck maintenance, the auto/truck garage, the machine/sheet metal shop and the main stock room. The company reports that the visibility afforded by MRO enabled identification of more than \$1 million in excess and obsolete supplies; that allows cost avoidance of about \$100,000 a month.

Originally developed by Kennedy Space Center (KSC), SIMS required software modification for adaptation to company use. Tropicana's own computer technicians handled the adaptation, converting a manual Cardex inventory control system into computer language compatible with SIMS; KSC provided assistance in the form of documentation manuals and adaptation guidance. Additional guidance was provided by the Computer Software Management and Information Center (COSMIC)<sup>®</sup>, NASA's repository of adaptable computer programs and software expertise.

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